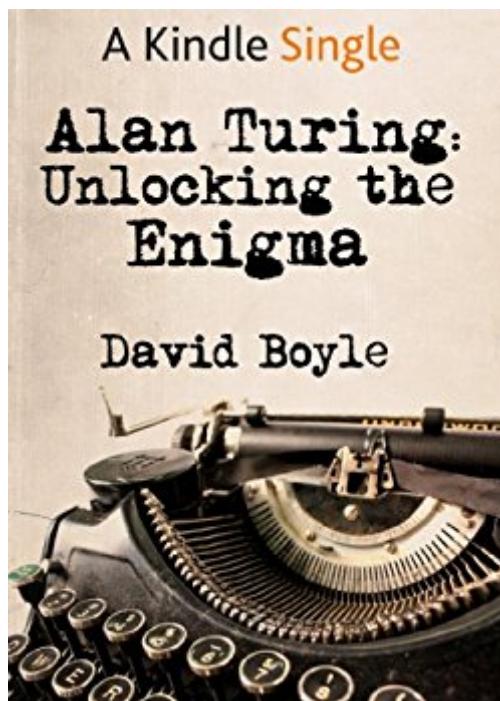


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Alan Turing: Unlocking The Enigma (Kindle Single)



Synopsis

Alan Mathison Turing. Mathematician, philosopher, codebreaker, a founder of computer science, and the father of Artificial Intelligence, Turing was one of the most original thinkers of the last century - and the man whose work helped create the computer-driven world we now inhabit. But he was also an enigmatic figure, deeply reticent yet also strikingly naïve. Turing's openness about his homosexuality at a time when it was an imprisonable offense ultimately led to his untimely death at the age of only forty-one. In 'Alan Turing: Unlocking the Enigma', David Boyle reveals the mysteries behind the man and his remarkable career. Aged just 22, Turing was elected a fellow at King's College, Cambridge on the strength of a dissertation in which he proved the central limit theorem. By the age of 33, he had been awarded the OBE by King George VI for his wartime services: Turing was instrumental in cracking the Nazi Enigma machines at the top secret code breaking establishment at Bletchley Park during the Second World War. But his achievements were to be tragically overshadowed by the paranoia of the post-War years. Hounded for his supposedly subversive views and for his sexuality, Turing was prosecuted in 1952, and forced to accept the humiliation of hormone treatment to avoid a prison sentence. Just two years later, at the age of 41 he was dead. The verdict: cyanide poisoning. Was Turing's death accidental as his mother always claimed? Or did persistent persecution drive him to take his own life? 'Alan Turing: Unlocking the Enigma' seeks to find the man behind the science, illuminating the life of a person who is still a shadowy presence behind his brilliant achievements. David Boyle's work has been widely praised. David Boyle is a British author and journalist who writes mainly about history and new ideas in economics, money, business and culture. He lives in Crystal Palace, London. His books include 'Unheard Unseen: Warfare in the Dardanelles', 'Towards the Setting Sun: The Race for America' and 'The Age to Come'. Endeavour Press is the UK's leading independent publisher of digital books.

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Customer Reviews

Alan Turing was a notable philosophical/mathematical figure in the advancement of computers and artificial intelligence. Known for his contributions at Bletchley Park (Britain's codebreaking headquarters) during World War 2, Turing worked on cracking the Nazi's Enigma code which was used in transmissions between the U-Boats and Nazi command. At Bletchley, he developed enhancements to a Polish bomb machine, which decrypted messages, to create the bombe, a machine that found the settings of Enigma. Following the end of the war, Turing pursued his fascination with machines further and began conceptualising the modern computers that we use today. He also worked on the design of the Automatic Computing Engine (ACE) and came up with The Turing Test, which was a method to set a standard to determine if a machine was intelligent or not. The idea was that if the user couldn't tell whether who they were talking with was a computer or a human, then a computer could be said to be intelligent. Turing was also an unashamed homosexual at a time in Britain where, under the Labouchere Amendment, homosexuality was illegal (this same law also sentenced Oscar Wilde to 2 years hard labour). Turing was arrested in 1952 after talking about his boyfriend during a burglary and sentenced to oestrogen injections (chemical castration) that caused him to physically change (he grew breasts) and disrupt his thinking. In 1954, at the age of 41, Alan Turing committed suicide by swallowing cyanide, perhaps as a result of his persecution as a gay man. A half-eaten apple was found alongside him and it was believed that the apple was the delivery method of the poison. Turing was obsessed with the Disney film Snow White where the apple sends Snow White into a deep sleep.

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